New tea gardens

†177. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain industrial houses have submitted a proposal for plantation of new tea gardens in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) As per available information, no proposals have been submitted by industrial houses for plantation of new tea gardens in the country.

(b) Does not arise.

Revival of old tea estates in Uttaranchal

†178. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain steps are being taken by the Tea Board to revive old tea estates in Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the area of old tea estates in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Tea Board has extended financial assistance by way of subsidy for establishing a nucleus tea plantation by M/s. Kumaon Mandal Vikash Nigam at Kausani by reviving an old tea estate and bringing more area under tea. A processing factory has also been set up in the plantations. The existing tea gardens in Uttaranchal are practically non-functional owing to long neglect and the bushes have become aged and unproductive. The revival can be brought about through rejuvenation pruning and consolidation besides uprooting of old and uneconomic sections, replanting of the same with improved variety of planting materials and adoption of scientific agricultural practices. Considering the neglected state of the existing tea gardens, as a special consideration, Tea Board has allowed reclamation of the earlier abandoned tea areas for rejuvenation and replacement planting. Tea Board has also set up an office at Almora to provide guidance

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and financial assistance for various developmental activities. The State Government has also established a Tea Development Board for reviving the old tea gardens in the State.

(c) The total area of the existing tea gardens in the State is 1068 hectares.

New Foreign Trade Policy

179. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to announce a new Foreign Trade Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the new policy is likely to be put in place; and

(c) whether, while formulating the policy, interests of the India's trading community would be kept in view so that they may not be deprived of a level playing field *vis-a-vis* the international business community operating in the global market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) A new Foreign Trade Policy is under formulation and would be announced in August, 2004. The New Foreign Trade Policy is aimed at boosting exports, including agricultural exports and creating additional employment.

Quantitative restrictions on Iron ore, pig iron and sponge Iron

180. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is seriously considering of putting quantitative restrictions on iron ore, pig iron and sponge iron in view of the persistent shortage of supply in the domestic market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are also considering a raw material policy;

(d) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(e) the benefits to the domestic traders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) There is no proposal